

Dolly of Logan Square

*The Author of This Very Human Bit of Drama Has
Adopted an Unusual Method for Fiction. He Makes
One Word Do the Work of Ten, and More Effectively.
It Was He Who Wrote "Shagan"*

By James Oppenheim

Illustration by Lawrence Herndon

DOLLY lived on Logan Square. It is in Chicago. I thought of writing a novel and calling it "Dolly of Logan Square." But there are reasons why her life makes a story. You shall see.

She was the Dolly to whom the popular song was written: "Good-by, Dolly Grey." You remember the song. Everybody whistled it. And then forgot it. It is the way with such songs. It was the way with Dolly. At one time every one in Chicago's Loop knew her. She was seen in all the cafés, restaurants, theatres and at all the balls and chowders and blow-outs. A party without Dolly was unthinkable. She came in with a Sarah Bernhardt entry and set the place aroar. Wherever she went there was excitement. She carried a revolver, but never used it. It was handy for any man who dared to go beyond the limit with her. Whereupon she took it out of her purse, and he cooled off.

Dolly was employed by the great American Implement Company as private secretary to John Skatow, the general manager. He found her indispensable. If she was away, the business came to a standstill. Or almost. She alone could tell him how to run his affairs. And did. This is the way she did it:

"John"—her eyes snapped fire and her fingers snapped in his face—"are you a man? The devil you are, letting the Harvester people put it over you with their snarled

'G.' What's a snarled 'G,' anyway? Nothing. We have the patented 'Q' twist. It means the farmer goes to bed with the guinea-hens instead of staying up with the night-owls. Get me? Fire a letter into Quentin, Howe & Bossard that will make the hair between their eyebrows singe to a minute. This business is ours, and we'll padlock it for keeps."

You know the talk. It is American. I could listen to Dolly chatter for solid hours. She never stopped, except when Sadowitz slapped her. Then she stopped, and her story began.

Skatow, mindful of profits and prestige, doubled and redoubled her salary to keep her. The Harvester people, the biggest in Chicago, knew her. The Swift and Armour people knew her. They were all after her. Skatow gave her an automobile, not in the way that many men of money give their employees furs, diamonds and cars but in exactly the way that he bought her a new typewriting machine. He had to keep her.

"Come in when you want to," he told her. And she did. Sometimes it was noon. Sometimes it was nine. When it was nine, Skatow jumped like a boy caught stealing apples. Dolly always thought him a little slow. He had a habit of opening an envelope by slitting it under the flap, taking out the letter and then searching the empty envelope three times, after holding it up to the light to see if he had missed anything. Dolly couldn't stand it. He would stare

at her while she shoveled the mail off his desk onto her own, which stood beside him. Then she went through it like a Texas cyclone, and the white paper kept dropping down before him with crisp advice. "Here; say this. Say that. Here's a whopper. Cut him down. Cross him out." And so on. She was a real secretary. The rest are only typists.

Well, when she was at the height of her power, she met Sadowitz. It was this way: Dolly always had a dozen lovers about her. They whistled her down the roads in their racers; they snorted her over the lake in their private yachts; they week-ended her over in Michigan or Indiana. She remained unmoved, and always had the last word.

"Marry you? Say, Gus; what are you giving me? I can run the American Implement Company, but I never pretended to be able to manage a kindergarten. Find a mother, Gus, and then we'll be friends."

She meant it. There was Floyd Hannigan, the salt-fish man. He did a fine wholesale business. He was big, shining, regular, good-natured. He protected women. He would have laid down his life for Dolly. He got her out of danger the time she spent two months tracking down an embezzler for Skatow, and, after a wild chase, ended up at Niagara Falls in a nest of criminals who began tracking her. She lost her nerve for the first time in her life and telegraphed Hannigan. He came down with automatic pistols and took her and the embezzler back to Chicago. That quick-money man is in the pen now, and threatens to shoot Dolly when he gets out. But he won't shoot her. You shall see.

Hannigan, by all the rules of the game, should have landed Dolly. But he didn't. She laughed at him.

"I make you happy now, don't I?"

"Yes," he admitted.

"Stay happy; don't marry me."

Then she patted his head and called him a "cute child." It only made them better comrades than ever.

THERE were men who misunderstood Dolly. When Skatow first saw her, he thought that a queen of burlesque had invaded the sacred quiet of the implement company. She dressed up, and improved on the Paris styles, Chicago fashion. That means a touch of color. And several

touches. They were in her cheeks, which she turned to a bright red. She penciled her eyebrows and eyelashes. She rouged her lips. She powdered. She looked almost out of sight, she was so hidden in colors. Then her hair was frizzly, a bright yellow, and her nose turned up at the end and made a curve like a scythe, and her eyes were a blue you could look into like water, and her figure was perfect. The high heels, the lace-work stockings, the gaudy dress, the high-colored face and the frizzly hair deceived many men. It deceived Lon Sheeley, to his sorrow. She told him frankly, over a table and a bottle of champagne at Castaway's:

"I would fall like any woman, if it was special. Romantic, Lon. Fix up a boudoir effect, very rich. Studio stuff. Oriental hangings. Turn down the lights in violet globes. Burn incense. Put us there alone at one in the morning. Have a low couch. And soft music. And cigarettes. And dreams. And nothing could hold me. Only, dear boy, you'd have to get up early and hire a moving-van to get me over to the property. And when you called, I'd be out. Go home, Lon. And take home a bunch of forget-me-nots for your mother."

Lon went. He looked like a spanked boy.

Dolly met Sadowitz at an ordinary cabaret. He was a Polish Jew, born with a piano at the tips of his fingers. He had never studied music, for his father was a pedler who fled Poland and came to America. Peddling is not an American business, and old Sadowitz didn't thrive at it. Sadowitz was brought up on the East Side of Los Angeles and never got over it. He went into vaudeville when he was fifteen, starting at Raumann's new theatre on Grand Avenue, Los Angeles. Then he drifted about, half starving, until Chicago took him to her bosom. They liked him there. He wasn't much on looks. He was ugly, in the Jewish way—a hooked nose, a greasy complexion, and comical hair, all thick curls of crisp black. He was little and round-shouldered and thin-chested. And he played like a god.

He played, did Sadowitz. He played popular music; he played classical music; he made up music of his own. His fingers couldn't stop. They ran in pairs, triplets, and eight- and tenlets up and down the white-and-black boulevard, and wherever their pattering heels touched ground, the

music gushed. It was exactly like touching Texas soil with a pile-driver. Up comes a gusher of oil.

Sadowitz knew he could play, and was proud. But he didn't get along. He didn't care. He was like his father, who could easily in ten years have owned and run the biggest department store in Los Angeles, but preferred the long roads, the slow walk, the never-ending dream of peddlery. Here was a new country, and there a horizon never crossed before. Here was a house. Who was in it? Perhaps a beautiful old woman. Perhaps a strange, sullen man, who would house you as if he intended to rob you in the night, but who would sit before the fire and tell you his life-story before you went to bed. Everlasting romance of the road! Always new! Always one mystery after another opening up!

It was so with Sadowitz. He loafed from city to city. He loved the lights, the gaiety of cafés and cheap theatres. He loved the people. He played for them. They loved him.

Nothing fed him more than the thunder of applause when he finished a piece. Then he stood up, bowing right and left, and smiled. It was a radiant smile. It said, "Beautiful people!"

WHEN Dolly heard him at Castaway's, she fell in love with him. Madly in love with him. She was sitting at a table over in a corner with Floyd Hannigan. She sent Floyd to fetch Sadowitz. Sadowitz came over to her. She leaned forward and looked up at him, her blue eyes moist and radiant, her soft lips parted, and she took his hand in her's and said to him:

"You are a marvel. I love you."

Sadowitz stood staring at her. What in the world did she mean? She said it as easily as if she had been ordering a chop. But she held his hand and went on holding it.

"Music is my soul," said Dolly. "I love it. And if it weren't for music, this howling Chicago would be a desert in the wilderness. I couldn't stand it without music. Music keeps me alive. Now you know it. Play something for me. For me alone. Make it up. Play it for Dolly."

He did. No one could withstand her. He trembled as he went back to the piano. Did he love her? No; Sadowitz was like many other artists. He loved an image, an

an image of perfection, an image of divine woman who hovered over him and sometimes threatened to put on flesh and be Miss or Mrs. So-and-so, but never succeeded in winning him. But Dolly was different. Her directness bowled you off your feet. Her nonchalance in saying the most outrageous things quite stunned you. Sadowitz was stunned. He said to himself,

"My God, I have met *the* woman!"

This he had said before. But he played as if it were so. He played, did Sadowitz. Everybody noticed it. It was beautiful and deep. At the end, everybody stood up and there was silence. Sadowitz walked down between the tables, came to Dolly, who was also standing, and kissed her hand. Then he turned to the people and smiled. They understood. They broke into a thunder of applause.

She had him up to see her at Logan Square. Logan Square isn't much. Dolly's father was a foreman in one of the big slaughter-houses and had to live accordingly. The square is a bunch of dusty trees and dead grass and some dirt-spots worn hard by the boys and girls; and about this park are four rows of tarnished and peeled frame houses. Dolly lived in one of them with her father and mother. That was Dolly. Her parents lived that way. She loved her parents; she didn't care. What if she had an automobile and the best woman's job on the lot and was a star in the cafés and a millionaire's son offered her his hand? What of it? "I am Dolly," she seemed to say. "I do things my own way—the natural way. Here are my parents. Here am I."

Besides, she loved the quiet of the square and the back yard behind her father's house. It was fenced in and overrun with a tangle of weeds and briars and bushes, and a tall oak tree to shade it all. Under the oak was a bench, and you could sit there at night and see the moon or the stars or the heavy clouds glowing with the city lights. She loved the place. It quieted her. It soothed her. She needed it. She could get away from everything, drop her excitement and meditate. Then she sat, perfectly still, and felt religious. She felt the mystery of her existence, and wondered what the stars were and why the universe was so big. She wondered why she had been born, and why she was alive and where she was going. She thought of death. It quieted her. She was



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soothed by the greatest thought that man knows. And she was not frightened. She loved the thought of another life beyond this one.

Dolly took Sadowitz out to the back yard. There was a moon that night, a blotchy one swelling over the housetops and riding free to roll into a radiant silver disk. The wind was in the tangle, and it was soft. It was a summer night, and one could almost feel the tide running in on Lake Michigan, and the ripple of the waters. All the rest was still.

They sat on the bench and talked. They included the moon in their talk, and many cities and the madness of music. They included their two past lives. They got on together. She loved him, and knew it.

Then something happened. Dolly had decided to take him in hand. What nonsense! Here he was, with positive genius, and hardly making enough to keep him in shoes. Why, this young man could be a head-liner in the circuit and pull in his hundreds, maybe his thousands, a week. Dolly knew her business. She hadn't been running the American Implement Company for nothing. She would run Sadowitz; she would be his impresario; she would put him on the map.

She did. And lost him. The circuit touched St. Louis, and he went thither. All the way down he sent her telegrams from every way station; and when he got there he sent her a double night-letter, a bunch of flowers ordered from a Chicago florist, and these words: "I kiss your handkerchief."

It was not a strawberry-decorated handkerchief like the famous little mop that got Desdemona murdered by her lover, Othello, but it did nearly as much mischief. He gave it to a dark, heavy woman by the name of Selba Talmadge, who did an act on the same stage. And Selba used the handkerchief in her act and everybody said, "What a strange handkerchief!" They might well say it. It was a cubistic piece of silk, the pattern of which was so startling that you could see it from the gallery when Selba spread it out on her dresser. She always spread it out carefully. That was the trouble.

DOLLY saw it when Selba and Sadowitz came to Chicago. They had their acts on the same stage, first Selba, then Sadowitz. Dolly might not have noticed the handker-

chief if Sadowitz hadn't told her that he had lost it. That was bad enough in a lover. This was heart-breaking.

She went right through the stage-door behind the scenes as soon as Selba got through with her act. And she found the two in each other's arms. This was a new experience for Dolly. She was wildly jealous. She went up and stood before the stupefied pair and said to Sadowitz,

"You're nothing but a dirty Jew!"

Then Sadowitz slapped her. She reeled back, stared at him and walked away, suddenly quiet. Her soul was lost. She loved Sadowitz in a way that was new to her, in the way women love when they go before the judge and swear that their drunken, wife-beating husbands are mild and good and loving. She loved in the way the woman loves who goes down into the mud for her lover. He had slapped her. He owned her from that moment on.

Dolly had been on top all her life. Everybody obeyed her. She had things her own way. She queened it over all. She thought herself superior to others. She felt that she had condescended when she stooped to loving a Jew. For what are the Jews? The scum of the earth, thought Dolly. And here a Jew had not only insulted and degraded her by giving her handkerchief to a common woman and kissing her before Dolly's eyes; he had actually turned on her and slapped her in the face, so that the cheek turned first white and then crimson. He had struck her down; she was his.

Such are the Dollies. They are looking for a man all the time who will conquer them. When they are conquered, they are broken. That wild, untamable spirit submits to the harness, and gentleness succeeds. We shall see.

She went home and wept all night. She resolved to see him and tell him what he had done. She did see him. But to see him she had to write a letter. And then another. And then a third, in which she apologized for her remark. And then she saw him.

He came to the house, and they both wept in each other's arms out under the oak in the back yard. The moon was veiled that night, as well it might be. Let us hurry on.

He promised to be true to her. He said she had made him. He promised

everything. So did she. They became engaged, and soon they would marry.

It never happened. She could not hold him. She even followed him on his circuit. She sewed for him and bought him clothes and took him out riding. She mothered him, and he needed a mother. Nothing succeeded. Skatow found her absences increasing, her work going down-hill. It seemed as if her day was beginning to wane.

Then she went to Europe. Her doctor, Skatow and her friends all ordered it. So she went. She took Myra Hansum with her, an old school-friend. They visited Paris, Berlin and London, and escaped the great war by one day. They were on the *Mauretania* as it fled from some phantom of German war-ships and scooted its way to Halifax instead of New York. I was on that steamer and met Dolly. She told me of Sadowitz, the tears openly running down her face and streaking the laid-on colors.

There was no help for it. Dolly's spirit was broken.

Then she met Danny Presser. He was only a boy, though he looked a man. He was seven years younger than Dolly, but he was tall, well built, smooth-shaven, a handsome young American. He carried himself with an air, spoke little, and was a judge of women. His father was a big real-estate man in New York, divorced from the mother. She had married a scamp out on Long Island, and had wild parties, exciting motor-trips, road-house celebrations, and was drunk a good part of the time. She loved Danny, idolized him, petted him, indulged him, showered him with money, tempted him to overdrink. In short, she

tried to ruin him. But he was sturdy and had something in him. Dolly saw it.

She had a passion for saving men. She had always saved men. She resolved to save Danny from the clutches of his mother. So he fell in love with her. And said nothing.

When they got to New York, by Pullman from Halifax, she went on to Chicago; he stayed behind to see his father. His father advised him to marry and settle down. That was the only way out. If he kept on bumming round, his mother would ruin him. But the right sort of girl would make him work. He accepted the advice. He telegraphed Dolly, "I am coming to get you."

That was Danny.

Dolly understood the telegram and didn't know whether to meet him or not. But when the train drew in, she was there on the station platform. He took her by the arm and led her out. On the way he said:

"I must leave for New York in twenty-four hours, and you with me. My father will meet us and witness the marriage."

Dolly pleaded with him. You see, her spirit was broken. The old Dolly was gone. Here was a man who demanded, a man who knew his own mind, a man determined on ruling her. She pleaded in a little quiet restaurant all night. He kept on lighting cigars and looking at her. Now and then he said:

"To-morrow, Dolly, you go with me. I won't take 'No.' You're mine."

She went with him to New York the following evening. They are married and live in Brooklyn. Danny is in the automobile business. Dolly cooks his suppers for him and mends his socks. That is all.

The Real Boy in Fiction

IT ISN'T often that a real boy appears in fiction. In September EVERYBODY'S—out August 15th—there will be two of them—just regular kids, the kind every small-town man knows, and the kind every real man would like to have been. They are presented in a story called "Gee! Let's Go!" by Henry Francis Granger—the first of a series of "Little Journeys Back Home." They're fine boy-stories for boys and girls of anywhere from twenty to a hundred.